

A
NARRATIVE
OF

Certain Particular FACTS

WHICH

Have been misrepresented,

RELATIVE TO

The Conduct of Mr. BROMFIELD toward Mr. AYLETT, a Surgeon and Apothecary of *Windsor*, during their Attendance on Mr. BENWELL at *Eton*.

With a LETTER

To Mr. BENWELL, and that Gentleman's Answer.

By WILLIAM BROMFIELD, Surgeon to her Royal Highness the Princess Dowager of Wales, and St. George's Hospital.

L O N D O N,

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T O

Mr. BENWELL,

S I R,



URING your late illness, to have troubled you unnecessarily would have been unpardonable in me who was too well acquainted with your sufferings : but as I can now congratulate you on your happy recovery, I am convinced you will excuse my requesting the favour of you to peruse the inclosed narrative ; and if I am mis-informed in any particular, relative to yourself or family, that you will be so good as to correct it. When that is done, I must beg your permission to publish it ; as the most scandalous falsities have been propagated not only in your neighbourhood of *Eton* and *Windsor*, and the country towns adjacent ; but, also in the cities of *London* and *Westminster* :

minster : nay even the most distant parts
 the kingdom have been furnished with lib
 intended to prejudice me in the esteem
 my brethren ; from whence you will eas
 see the necessity I am under to justify m
 conduct in this publick manner, by relat
 ing facts as they were. I shall therefore d
 cline any farther apology for the trouble
 am giving you, rather flattering myself th
 you will receive pleasure in doing justice
 me on this occasion ; as the pretended cau
 of offence to Mr. *Aylett* was the obeyin
 of your commands,

I am, Sir,

Your very obedient

and faithful humble Servant

WILLIAM BROMFEILD

Conduit-Street, Hanover-
 Square, October 29, 1759.

A
NARRATIVE of FACTS, &c.

APPPLICATION to the publick in matters of private concern, is, I am sensible, in itself extremely wrong, and particularly where few can be supposed judges of the cause of controversy. For this reason, and to prevent scandal to a profession which has always suffer'd by disputes amongst its members, I would gladly have avoided publishing any thing on the present occasion : but the clamour which has imprudently been raised both here and in the country, as well as the misrepresentations of facts during my late illness, will I hope be thought a sufficient apology : especially as I first endeavour'd by all possible means to avoid it; and have even made myself appear rather in the wrong in regard to the neglect of punctilios, which gave offence to my adversary.

On

On *Tuesday May* the 29th, I receiv'd a letter from Mr. *Aylett*, a Surgeon and Apothecary of *Windsor*, informing me that Mr. *Howard* of *Eton* and himself desired my immediate attendance at Mr. *Benwell's*, who had forced the lower extremity of the *Tibia* through the Ligament of the joint. When I came to the patient's, I found both those gentlemen there, who gave me a farther account of the accident, and of the state in which they found the bone: they had replaced it, and supported the foot in a posture that promised to be most easy.

The patient had been bled freely, and properly treated in every other respect; on examining the parts, what ought to be done appeared extremely obvious. When we went down to consult on the case, we were unanimously of opinion, that nothing but amputation of the limb could be attempted. Mr. *Aylett* proposed to go up himself again to Mr. *Benwell*, and by degrees to make him acquainted with our sentiments: he soon return'd and told us Mr. *Benwell* desired some little time to consider of it, and to settle his affairs; and that then he would let us know his determination. Mr. *Aylett* went to *Windsor*, I accompanied Mr. *Howard* to
dine

ne with his family, and *he then desired*
would perform the operation if Mr. Ben-
well consented. I asked him who was Mr.
Benwell's family Surgeon? He answered, I
 : I desired to know farther, who on this
 cation was first with the patient? And he
 answered I was there some time before Mr.
Aylett came.

That this gentleman was Mr. *Howard's* pa-
 ent, I dare say will not be denied by any
 ne. I then told Mr. *Howard*, if it was his
 request, I would take off the Limb for him:
 while we were at dinner, a servant came and
 told us: "*that Mr. Benwell had consented to*
have his leg cut off; but particularly desired
that Mr. Bromfeild would do it, and that
it might be done as soon as possible." This
 message I since am inform'd was delivered
 by Mr. *Benwell* to Dr. *Bidle*, and he sent a
 servant with it to Mr. *Howard*. I sent him
 word I would make all possible haste; but I
 desired that Mr. *Aylett* might be acquainted
 with Mr. *Benwell's* resolution, and begg'd his
 immediate attendance: Mr. *Howard* and I
 directly began to prepare the dressings, ban-
 dages, &c. which while we were doing, Mr.
Hartcup came from Mr. *Benwell* desiring we
 would

would make as much haste as possible, for Mr. *Benwell* was very impatient to have it over.

I desired Mr. *Howard* to take an Anodyne draught with him; as the sooner that was given after the operation the better. We then went to Mr. *Benwell's* with the apparatus. As soon as I came into the house, I was desired repeatedly by the relations and friends of Mr. *Benwell*, to make all possible haste as he was in great anxiety. The dressings, instruments, &c. being all ready, as I had not an apron and sleeves with me, I asked a young man that served in the shop if he could procure me something by way of substitute, and he cut off some woollen cloth and pin'd it before me; I then expressed my wishes that Mr. *Aylett* would come, as the gentleman was so impatient: on which some of the people present said he was at that time up stairs with Mr. *Benwell*. I desired he might be informed every thing was ready, and that we waited for him.

When he came down he seemed much disconcerted, and said he wonder'd to see me so equip'd, I told him Mr. *Howard* had desired me to perform the operation for him, as Mr.

Benwell

Benwell was his patient ; but he answered if *Mr. Howard* did not chuse to do it himself, he had no right to appoint another ; and that he ought to have been consulted before I accepted it. Some few altercations as to our private opinions on that subject follow'd ; but I told him freely, that if he had a mind to take off the limb I should most willingly resign my pretensions, as I would always gladly be excused from performing an operation of that kind : but I added that I should not compliment him on that occasion to the prejudice of the patient, or agree to his doing it if I did not believe he was as capable as myself.

He then made many excuses for pressing the matter so far ; and mention'd some particulars of the many enemies he had in that place, who would report things greatly to his prejudice if he should not perform a part at least in the operation : particularly that if any accident happened at *Eton* School, the masters might think meanly of a man who was not equal to an operation of that kind ; but was obliged to send to *London*. Little persuasion was necessary to make me give up this point, to a

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man whom I had on all occasions endeavoured to serve ; and who by doing it expected some additional reputation, if it should be attended with success. This indeed was not at that time very probable, as the muscles were greatly confused and the patient of a full habit of body.

My intentions to oblige this gentleman, and to serve him essentially by this conduct on mine, I persuade myself cannot pass unnoticed by any impartial person ; for I never urged the natural plea, that I did not prepare myself for the operation as a person deputed by Mr. *Howard*, but at the particular desire of Mr. *Benwell* and his friends : which must have been unanswerable.

As I was taking off the cloth from before me, a gentleman came with a message from Mr. *Benwell*, desiring once more we would be as expeditious as possible, for Mr. *Benwell* was now in extreme pain. I told him every thing was ready, and we would wait on him immediately : the gentleman then added “ *that Mr. Benwell insisted on Mr.*
“ Brom-

“ Bromfeild’s *doing the operation*,” I told him I would wait on Mr. Benwell immediately, and as soon as I had taken off the cloth that was before me, “ *I went up stairs* “ *and thank’d him for the honour he was pleas-* “ *ed to do me in fixing on me to perform the* “ *operation, but hoped as the gentlemen who* “ *had already been with him were in every* “ *respect equal to it, that he would permit* “ *them to do it, and that I would give all ne-* “ *cessary assistance for his security, as other-* “ *wise it might lessen them in the esteem of fa-* “ *milies their in neighbourhood.* Mr. Benwell answered, that he did not see it could any ways affect them, and that his friends had recommended me so strongly to him, that he insisted on my doing it myself.”

I thought this was not a time to urge matters farther : perhaps I had already acted too warmly the part of a friend to Mr. Aylett in this instance. I went down : I told Mr. Aylett what had passed ; and he then said he would go up and speak to Mr. Benwell himself. He went up : and after some time he came down “ *and told me Mr. Benwell had de-* “ *sired us to settle it amongst ourselves.*”

I then asked him what part he would chuse to do in the operation? he said he should be glad to cut thro' the integuments and muscles; that I should divide the flesh between the bones, and remove the periosteum; that he would saw thro' the bones; and that I should secure the blood vessels; which, says he, every one knows is the principal part of the operation. All this was agreed on, and Mr. *Aylett* then said he made no doubt but that under my auspices he should do it well enough: he added that he could not blame Mr. *Benwell*, for desiring me to perform the operation, for had he been in such a case himself he should certainly have fixed on me for his operator.

We now proceeded: Mr. *Howard* and I secured the tourniquet, and pull'd back the skin and muscles, while Mr. *Aylett* performed the parts he had chose in the manner beforementioned. The operation finished and the patient in bed, we withdrew to another room: and at this time I thought Mr. *Aylett* seem'd greatly pleased with my conduct. We were all
 seem-

seemingly on the most friendly terms ; and we appointed the *Friday* following for my coming to *Eton* again. The Anodyne was given, Mr. *Aylett* was told of what it was composed, and he approved it. I directed Mr. *Aylett*'s journeyman keep his hand constantly on the stump; and that when he was tired my young man should take his place. Mr. *Aylett* said there would be no occasion for my young gentleman to stay ; for he could depend on his servant who had lived with him many years: I told him I meant no more than for some one to assist him when he should be tired ; and that if he disapproved my young gentleman's staying, I would take him home with me. He then said if I would spare him he might stay. I begg'd to hear by the coach the next morning what kind of night Mr. *Benwell* passed, and how he had found himself after the operation.

I received an account from Mr. *Hartcup* my young gentleman the next morning, which was as favourable as could be, On the *Friday* I went down, I was there about two o'clock : as soon as I arrived, I sent
Mr.

Mr. *Aylett* word that I was come; and the messenger brought for answer, “ *he had a*
“ *friend at dinner with him, and as I was to*
“ *dine at Mr. Benwell’s he desired I would dine*
“ *before we did any thing, and he would come*
“ *down by the time he thought dinner would be*
“ *over, and then we would dress the stump toge-*
“ *ther.*” Mr. *Benwell* was extremely offended at this answer: I saw it disturbed him greatly, he said, Mr. *Aylett* ought to have been there to have met me, as I came from *London*; or at least he might have come with the servant when he was sent for: a second messenger was dispatched to Mr. *Aylett*, who brought word he would be there soon, but as he did not return with the man. Mr. *Benwell* said that he did not care whether he came or not: “ *he then insisted on being immediately dress’d*
“ *as he was in great pain, and lay very wet*
“ *from the discharge;*” which was likewise extremely offensive; it being very hot weather, and the pillow hard and dry. He would not, be refused. I would have waited for Mr. *Aylett*, but Mr. *Benwell* was so much agitated, that by the persuasion of Mr. *Howard*, who was his proper Surgeon,
I thought

I thought it more prudent to break thro' a punctilio in our general form, and do what might have been thought irregular amongst strangers, than to risque the consequences of Mr. *Benwell*'s hurrying himself more.

The bandages and outer dressings were removed, clean ones were put on; and a fresh pillow was placed to support the stump; when it was nearly finished Mr. *Aylett* came: I then told him we had not taken off the first applications; only removed what was offensive and endeavoured to lay the patient easy by changing the foul pillow, which was hard with the discharge. Mr. *Benwell* then told him also that Mr. *Howard* was always his Surgeon, and that he was to dress him for the future: on this, I said to Mr. *Benwell* in the presence of Mr. *Aylett* and Mr. *Howard*; “nevertheless Sir, Mr. *Aylett* should certainly attend the dressings:” to which Mr. *Benwell* replied he should be always glad to see Mr. *Aylett*: Mr. *Aylett* said he wish'd him well; and would wait on him whenever he had occasion for him. We went down together; and Mr. *Aylett* desired to
speak

speak with me. We walked a turn or two in the garden, and he told me something seem'd to him wrong throughout this whole affair: that I should not have accepted Mr. *Howard's* deputation without his consent for me to perform the operation; that my young gentleman had at first refus'd telling his journeyman what a purging draught was, which had been given the patient, and the composition of which he supposed was refused to be told, by my order; and that my treatment of him as that day was indeed what he expected, from foregoing circumstances. In answer to all this, I told him that I could not think myself to have done any thing wrong in any part of this proceeding: neither had there been any disrespect or affront intended against him; and that my young man had no such orders from me. He said as we were not of the same opinion, it would be proper there should be a meeting of some friends who were of the profession to determine it: and if he found he was mistaken he should ask my pardon. He then went away.

As I was at dinner, a gentleman came in who told me that Mr. *Aylett* on being asked
 how

how Mr. *Benwell* did? said with warmth, he was not Mr. *Benwell*'s Surgeon; and that he was discharged. I answered that must be a mistake of Mr. *Aylett*'s: however I immediately waited on Mr. *Benwell*, and told him that Mr. *Aylett* looked on himself as dismissed from any future attendance; and that it was not a proper thing by any means to discontinue him from attending, tho' Mr. *Howard* was to act as his dressing Surgeon. To this Mr. *Benwell* answered that he never intended to dismiss Mr. *Aylett*: I then came down and told the gentleman what Mr. *Benwell* had said, and desired he would inform Mr. *Aylett* of it; which he promised to do.

The *Sunday* following I went to *Eton* again; and on my arrival, I immediately sent for Mr. *Aylett*. While the messenger was gone, his journeyman came to me, and told me his master was to dine at Sir *Edward Walpole*'s, but would be glad to see me after dinner, at any place I would appoint: I desired him to acquaint his master I would wait till he came to dress Mr. *Benwell*, if he would come as soon as he had dined: the young

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man went to his master, and brought word he would meet me at the *Christopher Tavern*, or any other place I would appoint. I went to the *Christopher*; where we dissented, as to the former points: he told me likewise that on consulting his friends, as to the particulars, he was told they were great flights, and implied a contempt of him: by which he would certainly be hurt in his profession: and that the world would conclude him ignorant. I told him I could not see the thing at all in that light; and I assur'd him nothing of that kind was ever intended by me. As I had a post chaise with a person waiting in it for me, I told him I must then take my leave; but that I should be there again the next day, and would send to him.

The next day, while the post chaise was waiting at the door to carry me to *Eton*, I wrote a letter to Mr. *Aylett*, recapitulating exactly the whole affair; and desired that as no injury whatever was intended him, all misunderstandings might be forgot; and that as I had found him and Mr. *Howard* on my first visit jointly concern'd for Mr. *Benwell*; I might see them so again

be-

before I left *Eton*: and hoped that the rest of the cure might be perform'd with harmony of all parties: for that disputes of this kind disgrace the profession in general; and serve no other purpose but amusement to the public, who turn both the disputants always to ridicule. This did not prove satisfactory; for soon after I received a letter from Mr. *Aylett*, in which he alledged that “ *he could not but think my*
“ *conduct as to some essential rights in busi-*
“ *ness, had been irregular at least; particu-*
“ *larly in the following points: first in my*
“ *accepting and attempting to put in prac-*
“ *tice Mr. Howard's deputation to me to ope-*
“ *rate for him, without asking his consent;*
“ *secondly, in directing and giving medicines*
“ *without his concurrence or knowledge; and*
“ *thirdly in my removing the first dressings*
“ *without his being present.*”

In answer to this, I wrote him word that: “ on re-considering what he had taken
“ amiss in my conduct at Mr. *Benwell's*, I
“ was sensible, that according to the puncti-
“ lios of politeness, which in strictness might
“ be insisted on by gentlemen of the pro-
“ fession.

“ feſſion. I had taken a liberty which I
 “ could not juſtify on ſo ſlight a friendship
 “ as I *now* perceived, ſubſiſted between us,
 “ and as it was *an error*, without any de-
 “ ſign to injure him, I ſhould have no
 “ objection to acknowledge it *as ſuch*, in
 “ the preſence of any friends of his, and
 “ mine; and aſk his pardon for it: as noth-
 “ ing would give me greater pleaſure than
 “ to be on the uſual terms of friendship
 “ with him.

The next *Sunday* afternoon was fixed for
 our meeting at the *Chriſtopher*: Mr. *Pitt*
 who dined that day at Mr. *Benwell's*, was ſo
 obliging as to go with me; and Dr. *Lucas* of
Windsor, and the Rev. Dr. *Graham* came
 as friends of Mr. *Aylett*. A written
 paper was then produced by Mr. *Aylett* *.
 He

1. * I acknowledge my conduct towards Mr. *Aylett*,
 relative to ſome eſſential forms of buſineſs was irre-
 gular; and that I did not intend him any injury or
 affront.

2. That I had no pretenſion to take off Mr. *Benwell's*
 leg, on the ſole deputation of Mr. *Howard* without
 Mr. *Aylett's* concurrence; nor ought any medicines
 to have been given without his approbation.

That

He asked me if I had any objection to this? I told him, that, as to medicines none had been given by my direction but the Anodyne draught, which was brought by Mr. *Howard*; and that I had acquainted him with the composition of it; which he had approved: he said that was very true; but it was not till after it had been given the patient. I answered that I really could not charge myself with that; but I imagined it had not been given till he had known of it: to this he declared upon his honour it was: I acknowledged then that was wrong, tho' without design. I told him I should allow that these little points of my conduct were irregular, tho' without any intent either to affront or injure him, in the least, in his profession. He then asked me if I had any objection to sign the paper which he brought: I told him not in the least: for that I never said any thing, I would not set my hand to.

3. That I ought not to have dressed the stump the first time without Mr. *Aylett*'s being present.

I sign'd

I sign'd it : and concluded all misunderstandings were cleared up ; and that sufficient satisfaction was given for any supposed slight that Mr. *Aylett* had received from me. I believe the company thought we were on terms of friendship again. Dr. *Lucas* observed it was much the best way, to reconcile matters in an amicable manner, as all disputes of this nature injur'd the profession, I then told the gentlemen present, that “ *tho’ Mr. Aylett was satisfied, I was not*
 “ *yet perfectly so ; for as he had withdrawn*
 “ *his attendance on Mr. Benwell from sup-*
 “ *posed slights that I had shewn him in his*
 “ *profession, I must now insist that he would*
 “ *go on jointly in the cure with Mr. How-*
 “ *ard as all objections were now removed :* ”

Mr. *Aylett* consented, and I believe the gentlemen present were well convinced of my friendly intentions towards him. I went immediately to Mr. *Benwell*, and made use of all the arguments in my power to prevail on him to accept Mr. *Aylett* again as one of his Surgeons : but all the intreaties I cou’d think of were useless : he grew warm at length, and said he would not refuse me any thing

thing else ; every thing he had in the world was at my disposal ; but that : “ *such had been Mr. Aylett's behaviour from the first of his attending him, to his withdrawing himself from him, that he had resolved not to let him come near him again, even were it to save his life.*”

I little thought to have met with such a determin'd denial, when I asked this as a favour ; and added it was the only one I would ever request of him. When I returned to the *Christopher*, I told them I was very sorry that I had no better success : and Mr. *Aylett* then thank'd me for my good intention.

Could any one imagine after being acquainted with these facts, that Mr. *Aylett* would have chose a revival of the subject ? especially as his chirurgical honour had been satisfied so fully.

I must now beg leave to make a few short remarks on the points complained of by Mr. *Aylett* ; and shall take shame to myself

self for an act of weakness in signing the just mentioned paper: yet perhaps the humane will not blame me when the motives that prompted me to it are explained.

In the first place I have acknowledged
 “ that I had no pretensions to take off Mr.
 “ *Benwell*’s leg, on *the sole deputation of*
 “ *Mr. Howard*, without *Mr. Aylett*’s con-
 “ currence.” This was the only point on
 which we had any altercation at our first
 meeting; and tho’ we differ’d in opinion, I
 was by no means obstinate in my senti-
 ments. When I found *Mr. Aylett* had a mind
 to perform the operation, I did not tell him
 that my authority for being *prepared*
to operate was not derived from *Mr. How-*
ard’s right of deputation, but from the par-
 ticular request of *Mr. Benwell*, and his friends,
 who had sent likewise repeated messages to
 me to make all possible haste, as he was in
 great pain and anxiety. Instead of urging
 these pretensions, I immediately took off
 the cloth, that was pin’d before me, and
 told him, how chearfully I should always
 resign performing an operation of that kind,
 where

where I thought my patient was as well in the hands of another *.

Would any one believe such an advantage could be attempted to be taken of this friendly indulgence of mine, in permitting him to perform a part in the operation, to give him credit, and in not insisting on the patient's indisputable right to nominate whom he pleased; as that it should be said at our last meeting, "if Mr. *Bromfeild* had said he was to take off the limb by the desire of Mr *Benwell* and his friends, no more could have been said;" Mr. *Pitt*, the nearest relation to Mr. *Benwell* was present at this last meeting, and said: Sir, I told you Mr. *Benwell* insisted that Mr. *Bromfeild* should perform the operation. What was his answer? I chuse to decline naming it.

I could have added another name or two who delivered the same message in his presence: † but when he was told so by them,

* Vide p. 9.

† Vide p. 10.

and by me on my return from Mr. *Benwell* after my expostulating with him to permit Mr. *Aylett* to perform the operation, instead of a decent acquiescence in the patient's determination, sent by repeated messengers; he answered he would go up himself, and would speak again to Mr. *Benwell* before he gave it up.

On his return, he informed me that Mr. *Benwell* had consented that we should settle among ourselves what part each should take in the operation*. Every one will be surprised when I relate what was the fact: namely, that Mr. *Benwell* was so far from consenting to Mr. *Aylett*'s doing any part of the operation, that he has frequently since he knew it, declared, that he believed he should have sunk under it, had he thought Mr. *Aylett* had done any part of it.

If this be true *I hope Mr. Aylett will make the proper excuses to Mr. Benwell for my accepting to perform only part of the operation*, when I had promised him a few

* Vid. p. 12.

minutes before to do the whole. The second article is: “ *that no medicine ought to have been given without (Mr. Aylett’s) approbation,*” at our meeting with our friends I objected to this article; declaring, that I never directed any medicine whatever to be given except the anodyne draught, and that I imagined I had told him the composition of it, before the patient took it: to this he said upon his honour he did not know it till after it was given.

Mr. *Howard* and Mr. *Hartcup* both declare, that if Mr. *Aylett* will recollect himself a little he will find, that it was not given till after we return’d from washing our hands; therefore he must be mistaken, for almost as soon as we went into the other room from the operation, I told Mr. *Aylett* that Mr. *Howard* had made such an anodyne draught, which he approved of: but allowing the opiate had been given as soon as possible after the operation, ought not this to have been done? and would not any man who had a regard for his patient’s welfare have given a check to an emotion

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pride,

pride, had he felt any on such an occasion ; and have said, I am obliged to you Sir for thinking of it, it had escaped me in my hurry. In reality this cause of complaint was introduc'd but two days before our meeting for an accommodation : I never heard of any other accusation against me at any of our former meetings, but that of accepting Mr. *Howard's* deputation, and dressing the limb the first time without Mr. *Aylett's* being present.

The third and last accusation of irregularity relative to some essential forms of business committed by me was *the dressing of Mr. Benwell's limb the first time without Mr. Aylett's being present.* I readily allow'd this to be a breach of a punctilio usually observ'd by gentlemen of the profession : the fact was so, but why I did so very unpolite a thing, did not appear upon the face of the articles. If we look back to p. 14. it will be found that the patient himself insisted on its being immediately done, as Mr. *Aylett* did not come with the messengers : Mr. *Howard*, whose pa-
tient

patient Mr. *Benwell* was, desired also that it
 might be done immediately ; and Mr. *Ben-*
well has since declar'd if I had not, Mr. *How-*
ard and the people about him, should have
 done it directly. It is also true from the hur-
 ry of spirits Mr. *Aylett*'s message had occa-
 sioned in Mr. *Benwell* I thought it prudent
 to comply with what he insisted on ; and
 had there not been an intimacy between
 Mr. *Aylett* and me, I should certainly have
 thrown the office on Mr. *Howard* as his pro-
 per Surgeon ; but if my doing it to oblige
 the patient was a liberty taken from the sup-
 posed right of friendship, and I am mistaken,
 I cannot but observe that I was drawn into it,
 by Mr. *Aylett*'s own behaviour ; for nothing
 but the same pretensions could have made
 Mr. *Aylett* send me the message he did. Had
 I been a stranger to him and sent for from
London for my opinion, he certainly would
 have come back immediately with the first
 messenger ; but the patient's will under the
 circumstances abovementioned, and his dres-
 sing Surgeon thinking a farther delay might
 be injurious to him will I apprehend appear
 sufficient justification of my conduct, as to
 this

this particular : and I flatter myself had Mr. *Aylett*'s friends been acquainted with the facts I have now mention'd, they would have thought it a most unreasonable request of Mr. *Aylett* to ask me to sign a paper acknowledging irregularities in my conduct, as to some punctilios usually observed by gentlemen of the profession, in respect to each other ; when I was not to blame in any one instance ; as must be seen, now the points alleged as wrong, are explained. The natural questions now will be, why did you not explain the facts before ? and why did you sign the paper ?

It was at first my intention to explain the articles of accusation against me to the gentlemen present ; but 'twas said there had been too much altercation already on the subject, that we now perfectly understood each other, and that the purport of their meeting was to accommodate matters ; and therefore it would be better to say no more on the subject. I the more readily assented to this, as it grew late, and I had a person in the post chaise at the door waiting for me to go to
London :

London: therefore without considering the consequences, and not being in the least apprehensive of the ill use that would be made of what I did, prompted by good nature extended to folly, I sign'd the paper: which seem'd to me as torn from a letter, and intended to serve only for a memorandum of the points in which he thought I had acted irregularly towards him as a Surgeon.

The signing this was a work of supererogation, as he desired me only either to acknowledge them as irregular, and without any design to affront or injure him in his profession before some of our friends; or to give it in writing. As I gave my consent to the articles as read, I could certainly have refused signing them; but my friendship for Mr. *Aylett* at that time was such that I would have taken any step to have removed the prejudices he had incurr'd, thro' warmth of temper, from several persons in his neighbourhood; especially as I look'd on myself in some measure the cause, as he had look'd on my behaviour towards him in an improper light, and in consequence had withdrawn himself from attending on Mr. *Benwell*. Had he ask'd me to have done any thing

thing else that I thought could have serv'd him, I should not *then* have refused him; but had I imagined that letters were to have been sent all over *London*, and copies of the paper sign'd by me *with additions* transmitted to every coffee-house and ale-house in town and country, by agents employ'd for that purpose, it would not have been so easily obtained. But this is so mean and despicable that it's beneath my farther notice.

Nothing but the greatest weakness, join'd with the highest degree of ingratitude, I should think, could have prevail'd on any one to have taken such steps, after the many civilities and friendly acts I had done him; not only throughout the whole of this transaction, but on every other occasion that offer'd since our first acquaintance. I certainly shall be blam'd for making any concessions when I was not culpable, but on the contrary had been endeavouring to serve this man to the utmost of my power : but when it is consider'd what was then, and wou'd constantly have been clamour'd against me, I flatter myself any
other

ther person in the same circumstances, would have acted as I did.

It was said every where that Mr. *Aylett* wrote me the letter to invite me down; and that afterwards I prepared myself to do the operation without his knowledge: and lastly, that I took off the dressings the first time from the stump without his being present. I was likewise charged with want of candour, and being ungenerous to a friend who had call'd me in; that such proceedings were irregular between gentlemen of the faculty; and consequently that Mr. *Aylett* as a man who was tenacious of the honour of the profession, was oblig'd to withdraw himself from attending any longer in a family where such slights had been put on him.

That Mr. *Aylett*, wrote the letter to me is very true, but it is also true that he did not propose me to Mr. *Benwell's* friends, but only did the office of secretary to Mr. *Howard* (who did name me to them for my assistance) while he was employ-

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ed in bleeding the patient ; as to the other points, tho' they are sufficiently explain'd here, yet at the time of our meeting at the *Christopher* they were not.

Would not one imagine by this extraordinary behaviour, that the courage of Mr. *Aylett* had been call'd in question, and that these steps were necessary for his justification? or rather does not this appear to be an *ignis fatuus*, to take off the attention of those to whom Mr. *Benwell*'s friends had complain'd of his inhumanity, in contesting a point of that nature, when the poor gentleman was waiting with the greatest anxiety for the operation to be perform'd? As also in his discrediting every relater of Mr. *Benwell*'s determination that I should perform the operation for him : and lastly, attacking him under these circumstances for himself to do it ; which Mr. *Benwell* absolutely refus'd, and told him he insisted on my doing the operation : notwithstanding which, that he should inform me that Mr. *Benwell* had consented, that we should settle it amongst ourselves, what part
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each should do in the operation, and persisted in the cruelty to do it ?

These I find were the complaints against Mr. *Aylett*. How far the method he has taken has remov'd them, he best can tell: I own I cannot conceive that it at all concern'd the publick in general, or Mr. *Benwell* and his friends in particular, whether every punctilio of the profession had been nicely observ'd between us or not ; provided we had both done our duty. I shall only observe that had I in reality inadvertently committed the irregularities he had put down on his paper, and acknowledged them as errors, tho' without design, in the presence of one or more gentlemen this would have been satisfactory to a man of the nicest honour. What ingratitude must it then be in a man who knew that every step I took contrary to what he would wish was no act of mine, but the immediate order of Mr. *Benwell* and his friends ; and who could not but see, that all my endeavours were to take off the clamour that was raised against him by his enemies, and to reconcile him to the favour of Mr. *Benwell*?

well? Had I been more successful, I fancy I should not have been laid under the necessity of this justification of my conduct.

That the friends of Mr. *Aylett* should by all means endeavour to disculpate him from the charge made by Mr. *Benwell's* relations and friends which arraign'd his humanity is natural; and it might be excused had they attempted to divert the attention of his enemies from the object they thought would most injure him, by producing the paper signed by me: but that men who are aiming at any degree of eminence in their profession as Surgeons, should be inlisted in his company of defamers, is to me astonishing; yet such I am informed there are, who being wrote to, with a copy of the articles of irregularities inclosed, have been privately handing them about, intending to prejudice me with my brethren. Would not any man who from his profession would wish to be look'd on as a gentleman, on receiving such a letter, have endeavoured, first to inform himself of the fact from the person reflected on, if known to him? And if I am rightly inform'd, there
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are among them persons whom I have essentially served, and to whom I have on all occasions shewn the greatest civilities. If so, I think, if they have any feeling, this mark of my contempt of such behaviour will be sufficiently galling; especially to men whose self sufficiency, is their predominant virtue: and the more now they have found how much such behaviour is discountenanced by every man truly eminent in the profession.

I have yet one apology to make, which is to the publick, for giving them this trouble relating to a private transaction; and I find this the more necessary, as my friends in the profession are pleased to think I should not have condescended to do it: but it was my desire that the truth should be made publick, where falshood had been so carefully propagated. If there wants a confirmation of the facts, the following letter from the gentleman himself contains one so effectual, that after it, I can take no farther notice of what may be urged by any one.

F I N I S.

T O
WILLIAM BROMFEILD, Esq;
IN
CONDUIT-STREET.

S I R,

I am favour'd with your letter, and the narrative of your conduct in respect to Mr. Aylett: I cannot say I was totally unacquainted with his behaviour either to you or me, before the arrival of your packet; and I blush to think that there is a person so void of humanity as he has shewn himself to be, by his conduct towards me during my greatest distress, and his ingratitude to you for repeated endeavours to serve him in my family during his attendance on me; as well as your friendly good offices in persuading me to permit him to attend me again, after he had withdrawn himself, because I insisted on Mr. Howard's dressing me for the future, who I told him was always my Surgeon; tho' nevertheless, I should be glad to see him. Believe me Sir, I was not a little shocked when I was first told that Mr. Aylett had took off my limb, as till then I thoroughly believed that you had performed the whole operation. To think that a
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man could have the hardiness to impose on you the greatest falsity surprises me; for, so far from giving my consent to his doing any part of the operation, that I told him I had insisted on your doing it; on which he said he must then take his leave, and went down stairs: and I do declare that had I thought he had a knife in his hand employed on me, I do believe I should have sunk under the operation.

Could any one imagine I should have been so weak as not to take the advantages of your hand, whose character was so well known to every one of my friends who were then present, and whom Mr. Aylett himself had, not two hours before, recommended to me for your great abilities in your profession, when he was persuading me to consent to the taking off of my limb? It is impossible that any man's vanity can carry him so far as to suppose that an operation of that kind can be so well performed by any private practitioner, who possibly may not do it, five times in his whole life; as by one who is under a necessity of doing it in an hospital, probably as many times in a week.

I have read the narrative with great care and attention to my whole family, who were better acquainted than I, with what passed below stairs. And they declare every circumstance related by you is fact, and are ready to give their oaths as to the truth if required.

You

You are extremely wellcome to make what use of this letter you think proper, for I shou'd be equally liable to the reproachful name of ungrateful did I not do you all the justice in my power, for the ungentle treatment you have met with on my account. Had the scurrility reach'd no farther than my neighbourhood, as I can now go abroad, your taking any farther notice of it would have been unnecessary; but how far the slander may have reach'd I cannot guess: but if beyond my small circle of acquaintance, you can best determine what ought to be done,

I am, Sir,

Your obliged and very humble servant,

*Eton, October 30,
1759.*

JOSEPH BENWELL.